three years, year-wise; and

(e) the number of complaints pending as on date for disposal?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Payment of the agreed wages is the responsibility of the employers while refund of security deposited is the function of Protector of Emigrants. The recruiting agents, threfore, are not concerned with complaints in this regard.

(b) Question does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) No amount has been recovered by Government from the recruiting agents.

(d) During the year 1989, Bank Guarantees of three recruiting agents were forfeited. No Bank Guarantee of the recruiting agents was forfeited during the years 1987 and 1988.

(e) Question does not arise in view of (a) above.

Late running of the Kerala Express

544. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN:
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state;

(a) how many times Kerala Express reached at respective destinations late during the last three years; year-wise and destination-wise;

(b) whether, on 23rd June 1990 Delhi-bound Kerala Express reached late; if so, the details threof;

(e) when the New Delhi Station authorities had made the announcement regarding the late arrival of the said train;

(d) whether correct information regarding the late arrival was made available by enquiry office over telephone; if not the reasons therefore; and

(e) what steps are being taken to run this train in time which connects Kerala's capital with Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Kerala Express reached New Delhi late on **224, 224 and 267 days and at Trivandrum** on 189, 186 and 237 days in 1987-88, 1988-89 & 1989-90 respectively.

(b) Kerala Express reached New Delhi late by 2 hours 10 **minutes** on 23rd June, 1990 mainly on account of heavy detention to the train after passing Mathura on account of signalling equipment failure.

(c) Announcements at regular intervals 24 times in all, about late running of this train were made from 1330 hrs. onwards upto the arrival of the train.

(d) The train suffered detention between Mathura Junction and New Delhi at different points and the latest information about its late running was conveyed by the Enquiry office from time to time.

(e) Unavoidable causes like accidents, bad weather including natural calamities like cyclone, heavy rains, miscreant activities and certain equipment failures have been mainly responsible for late running of Kerala Express. Round the clock monitoring is, however, being done to improve its performance as far as possible.

Construction of railway line between Khurdha and Bolangir in Orissa

545. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have re-considered the earlier proposal and decided to take up the construction of a railway line between Khurdha and Bolangir via Phulbani in Orissa in order to develop that backward area;

(b) if so, by which year the construction would be taken up; and

(c) whether it would be taken up during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c); A survey was carried out for Khurda Road-Balangir (289 km.) new BG railway line in 1986. The project was then estimated to cost Rs. 209 crores with 1% return on investment. An alternative alignment via Phulbani was also surveyed but the same was found very costly and with steeper gradients and as such could not be considered.

The Planning Commission had decided that the project be referred to the Working Group on Railway's *Programmes for the Eighth Five Year* Plan. However, the sub-group for new lines had not identified any particular new line project for inclusion in the Eighth Plan document for consideration of the Working Group but had only included a lumpsum kilometrage for new starts. Taking up of Khurda-Balangir project would depend on availability of resources in the Eighth Plan, and the position this project will get in the overall national priorities.

Supply of potable water in problem villages of Orissa

546. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the problem villages in Orissa as on 1st Aril, 1990;

(b) whether Government have formulated any scheme to ensure potable drinking water to those villages;

(c) if so, by when all the problem villages in Orissa are likely to be provided with potable drinking water;

(d) the achievement expected to be made by the 31st March, 1991; and

(e) the scheme drawn up for the 8th Five Year Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA): (a) to (e) Only 1320 problem villages remained to be covered as on 1-4-90. All other villages have been fully or partially covered. All these left over problem villages are to covered by 31-3-91. Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) allocation for Orissa during 1990-91 is Rs. 12.06 crores against which Rs. 6.02 crores has already been released. Last **Year's** arrear of Rs. 6.334 crores has also been released over and above this amount. Under the Mini Mission, Koraput and Phulbani districts have been released Rs. 0.50 crores and Rs. 1.63 crores respectively.

Indo-USSR Cooperation for promotion of Agriculture

547. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking any steps to promote agriculture in the country with the co-operation of the USSR;

(b) whether any progress has been made for setting up of joint ventures by both the countries in the field of agriculture;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether any action plan has been drawn up for the 1990-91 financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir. An Indo-Soviet Working Group for Cooperation in the field of Agriculture has been set-up with the responsibility of overseeing cooperation between the two countries. The Working Group held its 3rd meeting in Moscow from 24-31 May, 1990.

(b) and (c): The Working Group in its meeting reviewed the progress made in